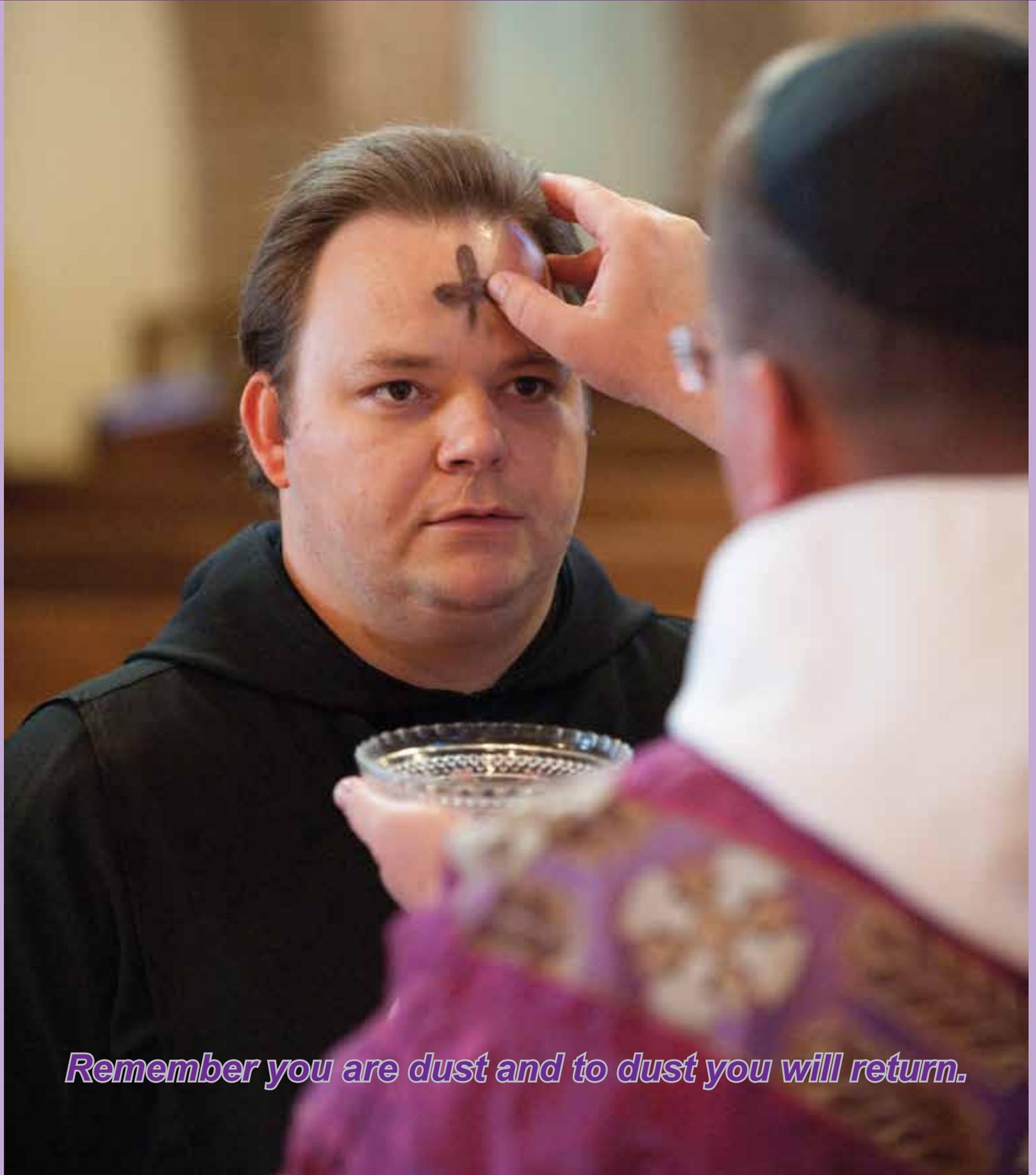


Magazine
MonksOK

Volume III, Number 1



Publication of The Benedictine Monks ✕ St. Gregory's Abbey ✕ Shawnee, OK 74804



Remember you are dust and to dust you will return.

GAUDETE! *Reflections from Abbot Lawrence*



Conversion is a word that typically evokes a nervous reaction in us – especially when it is preceded by the words “call to.” The “call to conversion” can make us nervous because it involves change, and most of us assume that change is going to be painful and for the worse. We tend to like the way things are, the routines to which we are accustomed, and the actions with which we are familiar. Even when we find ourselves in unhealthy, unproductive or even unhappy circumstances, the prospect of change makes us nervous because we do not know what a new reality will be like, or even if a new reality is possible.

The story of salvation revealed in Sacred Scripture is the story of God revealing to humanity that a new reality is possible and that the new reality offered is far better than anything that we can imagine. Sometimes the response to this revelation has been positive – such as the response of Abraham, “our father in faith,” who followed God’s call without knowing or understanding where it would lead him. Other times, however, the response to God’s revelation has been less than enthusiastic or whole-hearted, such as with the Israelites led out of Egypt. They seemed to look back constantly to the security of the life of slavery in Egypt that they had left behind. The promise of a land “flowing with milk and honey” was a bit vague when compared to their memory of the “fleshpots of Egypt.” They conveniently forgot that those fleshpots were served with sides of oppression, forced-labor, and population control by infanticide.

2 – MONKS OK

The season of Lent is an invitation for us to take a new look at the “call to conversion” and the circumstances of our own lives. Through the course of Lent, God invites us to leave behind the life-destroying effects of sin and to experience again the freedom of the Children of God won for us by Jesus Christ at Easter.

One of the wonderful things about the season of Lent is the fact that it is a communal journey of conversion, a time when the entire Church seeks renewal. In this way, it is a time when we need not be isolated by sin, but rather can be in solidarity with others who – like us – hear the call to conversion and change.

Following the passage of the Gospel of Matthew read for Mass on Ash Wednesday – Matthew 6:1-6; 16-18 – the Church traditionally has recommended three practices or disciplines to help us to experience ongoing conversion and renewed life in Christ: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. While Jesus warns us not to engage in these practices to win the esteem and praise of others, he still presents them as ways in which we can demonstrate our openness to grace and be transformed by the power of God’s love.

“When you give alms...”

Almsgiving is an opportunity to respond to the needs of others by giving of our selves. While Jesus admonishes us to be discreet when giving alms, he also affirms the importance of this act of piety, this gesture of selflessness. In giving alms, our attitude is not to be one of vanity, but rather one of love and concern, reaching out to others in need.

One of the obvious ways that we give alms is making a material gift to assist others – either directly or through an established charitable cause. Gifts of money or goods are signs of our desire to look beyond our own needs in order to help others in their needs.

Almsgiving also can involve something broader than money or material goods. We can reach out to meet the needs of

others by sharing with them our time, our physical presence or our voluntary labor. Generosity in these forms can also be a great way of giving alms during the season of Lent.

“When you pray...”

Prayer is essential to the life of any Christian. We read in the gospels of times when Jesus withdrew from others in order to pray in solitude, when he burst forth in spontaneous prayer of praise, and when he taught his disciples to pray. Jesus turned to the Father in prayer in times of difficulty and in times of joy. We are called to imitate him in our life of prayer.

Lent is a perfect opportunity for us to grow in our life of prayer. Once again, Jesus warns us not to make a public spectacle of ourselves when we pray. Rather, we are to experience the intimacy of prayer as we acknowledge our dependence upon God and express our trust in God’s providential care for us. During the season of

Lent is a perfect opportunity for us to grow in our life of prayer.

Lent, we can also join with others in a renewed commitment to both liturgical and private

prayer in order to offer praise to God and listen more attentively to the call that God extends to us at this point in our lives.

“When you fast...”

People most typically associate the practices of *fasting and abstinence* with the season of Lent, and they certainly are an important part of Lenten observance. Depending upon their age and state of health, Catholics are called upon to fast at least on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and to abstain from meat on the Fridays of Lent. The Church calls upon Catholics to engage in this minimal amount of self-discipline in order to acknowledge our need for ongoing conversion. Of course one can engage in additional forms of fasting and abstinences – such as the classic giving up chocolate for Lent – as long as those additional disciplines are healthy and done with the right motivation.

Continued on page 3

The Observance of Lent

By Rev. Basil Keenan, O.S.B.

Editor's note: Father Basil Keenan, O.S.B., professed vows as a monk of St. Gregory's Abbey on June 24, 1961, and was ordained to the priesthood on May 27, 1967. He has served in a variety of ways as a monk of St. Gregory's. For many years he was a professor of natural sciences at St. Gregory's College. In recent years he has devoted his energies to pastoral ministry, his current assignment being as pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Seminole, OK, and St. Joseph Chapel in Wewoka, OK. He enjoys ministering in both English and Spanish. He is also a Latin scholar and a promoter of Gregorian Chant.

GAUDETE!

Continued from page 2

And what is the right motivation? Certainly it is not to win the esteem of others, or to satisfy our vanity. Rather, we are to practice fasting and abstinence – or any form of self-discipline – in order to cleanse our lives of unhealthy and unholy behaviors so that we might more fully experience the new life that Christ has won for us.

That is why Jesus reminds us not to look gloomy because of our fasting, but rather to wash our face, comb our hair and radiate to others a positive attitude and even joy, rather than carry around a look of gloom and doom. After all, fasting, whether from chocolate, alcohol, caffeine, or – more importantly – from gossip, back-biting and intrigue, is meant to help us be more aware of the Kingdom of God in our lives. That should be a cause for great joy that needs to be spread to others.

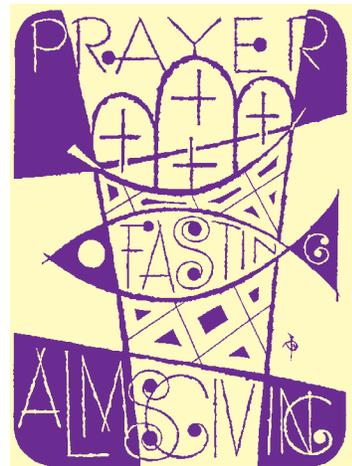
If the prospect of God's call to conversion during the season of Lent makes one a bit nervous, then one need only remember the final goal of that conversion: the experience of God's Kingdom in its fullness in the eternal Easter of Heaven. Keeping this ultimate goal in mind, we should look forward to our Lenten experience of conversion with eager anticipation, trusting that God will bring about a new reality within us that is far better than anything we can possibly imagine or dream.

Lent 2011 begins on Ash Wednesday, March 9, next to the latest date possible and the latest since 1943. For most Catholics and Catholic parishes it is the most serious season of the year: the time above all others when individually and as a Church we dedicate ourselves to deny ourselves and live totally for Christ, following his example of 40 days of prayer and fasting in the desert, preparing to be one with him at the Last Supper when he instituted the Eucharist, accompanying him in his passion, death, burial so that we can be one with him in his resurrection from the dead on Easter.

How do we accomplish this? Abbot Lawrence stressed in his article the three classic areas of Lenten observance: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. I agree totally with him. Each year I urge my parishioners (and myself): 1. to spend some time in quiet prayer each day, even if just 10 minutes, following the young Samuel's words "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening" recognizing God's presence and asking him what he wants of us; 2. to deny themselves in some way by fasting or another penance that counteracts their own weakness; and 3. to give of themselves, their time, or their treasures to help the needy.

Moreover, our observance of Lent should include the best of both pre-Vatican II and post-Vatican II. When I was a youngster in the late 1940's and 1950's, all Fridays were days of abstinence for those 7 years old or older and the weekdays of Lent were fast days for those between 21 and 59; both under pain of mortal sin. So most everyone felt obliged to observe Lent well at least superficially. Today the Church law is far more lenient, so many are not as serious in observing Lent. On the other hand, today the Easter Vigil and the catechumenate have been restored. For those entering the Church Lent is their final preparation to die with Christ to sin and rise with him to new life though the sacrament of baptism at the Easter Vigil. For those already baptized, Lent is then the time to die to our sinful selves with God's grace and by our own prayers, penances, and acts of service so that we may once again live with him as far as possible in baptismal innocence. 60 years ago

there was no Easter Vigil, it had become over the centuries the "Holy Saturday Mass", celebrated



at dawn on Holy Saturday. As a youngster I remember looking on Easter as a day to goof off now that Lent was over rather than the greatest feast of the year and the flowering of our Lenten observances.

St. Benedict, Patriarch of Western Monasticism, wrote in his Rule for Monks in the early 500's: "The life of a monk ought to be a continuous Lent. Since few, however, have the strength for this, we urge the entire community during these days of Lent to keep its manner most pure and to wash away in this holy season the negligences of other times." (Chap. 49) His words ring just as true today not only for monks but for all those who follow Christ. The Lenten observances of prayer, fasting(self-denial) and almsgiving(giving to others) must be a part of our daily lives at all times if we are to live up to the two great commandments of love of God with our whole mind, heart and soul, and love of our neighbor as our selves. Prayer is the most direct way to strengthen and deepen our loving relationship with God. Almsgiving(giving to others) is the way we show we truly love them. And fasting or other forms of self-denial are essential for true love because true love always involves putting the one we love ahead of our own selfish interests.

Lent then is the time for us to live our Christian life as deeply and intensely as possible, not only to "wash away the negligences of other times", not only to prepare ourselves to celebrate Easter as our own resurrection to a new life with the risen Christ, but also develop in our lives the daily practice of prayer, self-denial, and giving of ourselves to others that will continue, even if at a less intense level, throughout the year.

St. Gregory's Honors Sisters of Mercy

St. Gregory's Abbey and University honored the Sisters of Mercy of Oklahoma with the prestigious *Lux Benedicti (Light of Benedict)* citation on October 29, 2010. The citation recognizes individuals or organizations which embody the core Benedictine values of hospitality, community, reverence, attentiveness, balance, service, integrity and excellence. Sr. Mary Jane Hotstream, RSM, accepted the award on behalf of the Oklahoma Sisters, who are now part of the South Central Community of the Mercy Sisters of America.



The Sisters of Mercy first came to Indian Territory in 1884, joining the Benedictine monks of Sacred Heart in the mission of education. The monks of St. Gregory's and the Sisters of Mercy have served together many times since, and even have had familial ties. Fr. Charles Massoth, OSB, was influenced by his aunt, Sr. Mary Ambrose, and his sisters, Sr. Leonilla and Sr. Coletta, who preceded him in coming to Oklahoma as Sisters of Mercy.

Community Workdays

On September 25 the monks rolled up their sleeves to move the Abbey Library to a new room in order to create a more accommodating "Chapter Room" or meeting space for the community. The project involved un-shelving the thousands of volumes of the Abbey Library, disassembling, moving and reconfiguring the library bookshelves in an adjoining room, and then re-shelving the books in the correct order. Abbey librarian Br. Benet had the task guiding the transfer of the books in proper order. The task was

completed successfully in one day and the monks now enjoy a more appropriate space for meetings. The Chapter Room is still a work in process, and the Abbot is planning another workday for painting and final touches.

The Friday after Thanksgiving found several of the monks working in the monastery carpenter shop, giving it a thorough cleaning and rearranging the wood-working equipment to accommodate the recent donation of several pieces of new equipment and tools. Clouds of sawdust and dirt were raised in the process, but the end result was well worth the effort. A new roof was recently installed on the Abbey Shops, and funds are currently being collected to install new heaters, windows and an upgraded electrical system, to insure safety and energy conservation. The Abbey Shops also include work areas for auto maintenance, crafting of monastic habits and vestments, shoe repair, bee keeping and honey production, hand-press printing and equipment storage.

Statue of Bl. Kateri Rededicated

The monastic community recently contributed to the installation of a new entry plaza to the west side of historic Benedictine Hall, dedicating it to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American to be beatified by the Catholic Church. As part of this project the statue of Blessed Kateri that has graced the campus for 26 years was cleaned, restored and moved to this more prominent place on campus. The dedication of the plaza honors and re-



– Photo by Jim Smith

affirms the esteem in which St. Gregory's holds Native American Peoples and their importance in the past, present and future of the mission of St. Gregory's.

Rev. Wayne Paysee, Executive Director of the National Bureau of Black and Indian Missions, assisted Abbot Lawrence in the dedication of the plaza and restored statue. Rev. Don Wolf, Archdiocesan Priest and Chair of the SGU Board of Directors, and several members of the 4th Degree Knights of Columbus also participated in the ceremonies held on December 18.

Br. Simeon Leads Youth Retreat

Approximately 135 Catholic youth and their adult sponsors came to the campus of St. Gregory's from around the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City for a conference held January 6-8, 2011. The conference was organized by SGU's office of Faith Integration Development and Evangelization (FIDE). Br. Simeon was a principle organizer of the retreat and presented several conferences centered on the theme of "Thy Kingdom Come."



"Thy Kingdom Come" Youth Retreat

Several religious orders and diocesan vocation offices were featured in a Vocations Fair during the retreat. Fr. Nicholas and Abbot Lawrence also gave presentations. Participants joined the monastic community for several liturgies and formed a Eucharistic procession across campus followed by an all-night prayer vigil before the Blessed Sacrament in the Abbey Church.

Monks Hold Annual Meetings

Members of the monastic community gathered at the Abbey January 4-7 for their annual "Community Days." These annual gatherings provide an opportunity for the monks to receive focused ongoing formation, to address strategic issues and to enjoy relaxed fellowship after the hectic holiday season. The main theme of this year's gathering was liturgical practices at the monastery and preparations for the implementation the new edition and translation of the *Roman Missal*, which take place later this year on the First Sunday of Advent. Abbot Lawrence gave presentations on liturgical theology and spirituality, while Br. Damian reviewed the latest scholarship and standard practice of singing Gregorian Chant.

Over the course of the next few months, the monks will study the new *Missal*, learn new chant-based music, and reintroduce some of ancient Latin Commons to the Abbey liturgy.

On a related note, Abbot Lawrence will lead a retreat for the public on July 9-11, centered on the revised translation of the *Roman Missal*. The retreat will include

reflections on liturgical spirituality and practice, as well as a practical examination of the changes in the Mass. For more information call the Abbey Office at 405-878-6491.

Abbot Offers Inauguration Prayer

Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin recently asked Abbot Lawrence to deliver the concluding benediction at her inauguration as the 27th Governor of Oklahoma on January 11, 2011. Governor Fallin involved several person from her hometown of Tecumseh in various inaugural festivities and events. Abbot Lawrence was raised in Tecumseh.

Despite cold temperatures and a light snow fall, the ceremonies were held outside on the south steps of the Capitol Building. Abbot Lawrence commented that it was a great honor



to be asked to play such a significant role at the inauguration and that he wished to deliver a prayer that would represent the aspirations and hopes of all Oklahomans.

Monks Assist at Installation of New Archbishop

Pope Benedict XVI has appointed the Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley to serve as the Fourth Archbishop of Oklahoma City. Archbishop Coakley, who had been serving as Bishop of Salina, KS, was installed on Friday, February 11. Several of the monks attended the momentous occasion and two had special roles in the liturgy. Br. Benet formally greeted Archbishop Coakley on behalf of men's religious communities and Br. Damian served as the conductor/director of the musicians and chorale during the Installation Mass.

Abbey Grants Easement for City Trail Expansion

St. Gregory's Abbey has granted an easement of property to the City of Shawnee so that the public might benefit from an expanded city trail system. Work was completed recently on a concrete walking and biking trail that connects the campus of St. Gregory's with existing trails around the nearby city airport. Funded through a federal grant, the 10' wide concrete trail was placed on Abbey pastureland along the north side of MacArthur Street. The project included the installation of an attractive pipe and cable fence, antique light fixtures, trees and shrubs.

Abbot Lawrence commented that the monastic community was happy to provide the easement of land to make this project possible: "This is a great opportunity for the Abbey to assist in improving the quality of life for our local community. The City has done a wonderful job on the project, and it certainly beautifies the view of the monastery." Abbot Lawrence also noted that several of the monks are already making use of the trail.



**Do you ever wonder where
God is leading you?
Are you interested
in becoming a monk
of St. Gregory's Abbey?**

**Contact Fr. Charles Buckley
for more information.
(405) 878-5464
cjbuckley@stgregorys.edu**



The monastic community and many guests celebrated its annual Mass for the Deceased Monks of St. Gregory's Abbey on November 4. Following the Mass the congregation processed to the Abbey Cemetery for special commemorative prayers.

Stewardship of the Heart

By Robert J. Allen

Over the years we have all heard or read many articles on Stewardship and I'm guessing have said to ourselves: oh, this is just another idea of how the Church wants to place more guilt on us to give.

To a certain extent, you're right. However, it isn't the guilt nor is it about the Church. The need to give is basic to who we are as a people of God; irrespective of religion.

Stewardship comes from the heart; it speaks not about the Church's need to receive, but our need to give. We all have many gifts, and they all come from God. Peter 4:10 says, "As each one receives a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." Now there is a wonderful insight – your gifts are your grace from God. The question becomes: Do we recognize these are God's gifts, His grace, or do we think or feel they are our own hard work and talent?

As the late Archbishop Thomas Murphy would say: Stewardship is answered by these two questions: "What do I own?" and, "What owns me?"

Stewardship is concerned with everything we have and how we treat these gifts of grace. Our bodies, our relationships, our wealth, our use of time, our use of talents, all are subject to God's gift of grace to each person in relationship to how we choose to respond.

What stewardship provides is an accountable way to measure our many gifts and how we give back to God or one another. Jesus gave us two commandments: Love God and Love one another. That is how we will be measured in what we do with our life.

Jesus tells us in Luke 6:38, "Give and it shall be given to you...for the measure you use will be measured back to you."

Give and it shall be given to you...for the measure you use will be measured back to you.
– Luke 6:38

Book Reviews

By Br. Benet Exton, O.S.B., Abbey Librarian, St. Gregory's Abbey, Shawnee, Oklahoma

The Little Way of Lent : Meditations in the Spirit of St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Rev. Gary Caster. Cincinnati, Ohio : Servant Books, 2010. 130 pages. Paperback. ISBN 978-0-86716-967-6. \$12.00.

This book by Rev. Gary Caster, a priest of the Diocese of Peoria, is a very good tool to use in one's Lenten journey. Father Caster is a contributor to the popular *Magnificat* magazine and to EWTN. He is also the author of several other books. His thesis for a Master of Arts in Church History was on St. Therese of Lisieux, who is affectionately known as "The Little Flower."

Fr. Caster wrote this book of reflections on the scripture readings for the Lenten daily Masses, using as his background St. Therese's spirituality of the "Little Way." He includes an introduction that explains the purpose of the book and how to use it. He covers all the Lenten daily Masses, including the Sunday Masses for Years A, B, and C, which not all reflection books on Lent do. Because of this, one can use this year after year.

The book is divided according to the weeks of Lent. Each week begins with a quotation from St. Therese on the division page, and each daily reflection also ends with a quotation from this popular saint. Many of the quotations come from the saint's autobiography, *Story of a Soul*. Fr. Caster shows through St. Therese's example how one can do little things to improve one's life and spirituality during the holy season of Lent. This book is highly recommended to those looking for a book of reflections on the Mass readings for Lent.

To our Friends and Benefactors:

It is our concern to protect your name and to assure you of this, OUR POLICY, to never rent, sell or lend your name to any other organization.

–Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, O.S.B.

OBLATE NEWS

The Oblate Community of St. Gregory's Abbey continues to grow. Two oblate novices were received and three individuals made their final commitment as Oblates of St. Gregory's Abbey during recent meetings in California and Oklahoma.

The annual fall oblate gathering at St. Gregory's Abbey was held on Sunday, October 10, 2010. Oblates from around Oklahoma and Texas gathered at the Abbey for Mass, lunch, a conference and Vespers. Approximately forty oblates and guests were able to participate in the gathering. During Vespers, Anne Macado of Seminole, Oklahoma, was received as an Oblate Novice. Juan Carlos Quiros of Shawnee and Antonio Lee of Oklahoma City made their final commitment as oblates.

Abbot Lawrence and Father Martin, Oblate Director, met with the California Oblate Group on Sunday, October 17. During the celebration of Mass at St. Benedict Parish in Montebello, CA, Genoveve Cervantes was received as an Oblate Novice and Francis Medina made his final commitment as an Oblate. Following Mass, the group met at Salvatore's Italian Restaurant to share stories and enjoy fellowship.



Oblates ... make a commitment to incorporating Benedictine prayer and spirituality into their everyday lives...

Oblates are men and women who formally associate themselves with St. Gregory's Abbey and who make a commitment to incorporating Benedictine

prayer and spirituality into their everyday lives in a manner appropriate to their state in life. Those interested in learning more about becoming an Oblate of St. Gregory's Abbey should contact Rev. Martin Lugo, O.S.B., at 405-878-5449, or frmartin@stgregorys.edu.

Pilgrimage from California To Oklahoma Scheduled

Abbot Lawrence will lead a pilgrimage from the Los Angeles area to St. Gregory's Abbey on July 6-12, 2011. The pilgrimage will be by travel coach and will leave St. Benedict Parish in Montebello, CA, on July 6, returning July 12. The pilgrimage will include a three day retreat at St. Gregory's Abbey. The cost of the pilgrimage is \$850 per person. For more information, please contact the Abbey Office at 405-878-5491.

MonksOK is published four times per year by the **Benedictine Monks of St. Gregory's Abbey** for our friends, oblates, and sponsors.

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Dear Readers:

We have been sending you our *MonksOK* magazine as a free subscription and hope you are enjoying visiting with us through this media. However, if for any reason you do not want us to mail this to you, or if you wish to be removed from any of our mailings, please let us know.

Thank you for your interest in our Abbey.

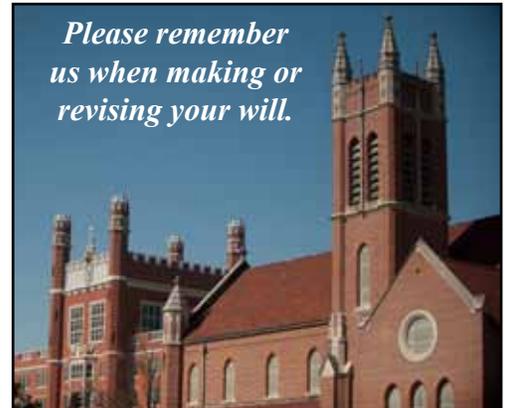
Spring Oblate Days Announced

Dates for the annual spring oblate gatherings have been announced. The spring oblate day at St. Benedict Parish in Montebello, CA, will be on Sunday, April 9. Abbot Lawrence will preside at Mass at 3:00 p.m. and a social dinner will follow at Salvatore's Restaurant.

The spring Oblate Day at St. Gregory's in Shawnee will be on Sunday, May 1. Registration will begin at 9:30 and Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. Please call Fr. Martin at 405-878-5449 for more details or to register for either event.



Please remember us when making or revising your will.



*Our official name is:
The Benedictine Monks
of St. Gregory's Abbey
Our federal ID # is: 73-117-4716*

2011 Triduum & Easter Schedule

Holy Thursday – April 21

6:00 a.m. Office of the Readings
 7:15 a.m. Lauds
 8:00 p.m. Mass of the Lord's Supper
 Eucharistic Adoration



Good Friday – April 22

7:15 a.m. Office of Tenebrae
 12:05 p.m. Midday Prayer
 3:00 p.m. Solemn Liturgy of the Passion
 6:45 p.m. Night Prayer

Holy Saturday – April 23

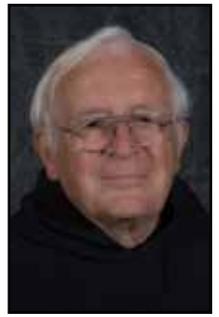
7:15 a.m. Office of Tenebrae
 11:30 a.m. Midday Prayer
 5:00 p.m. Vespers
 9:00 p.m. Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday – April 24

9:15 a.m. Lauds
 10:00 a.m. Eucharist for Easter Day
 11:30 a.m. Midday Prayer
 5:00 p.m. Solemn Vespers
 7:00 p.m. Compline

*All are
 welcome
 to join us.*

Br. Andrew Raple, O.S.B., Honored During Homecoming



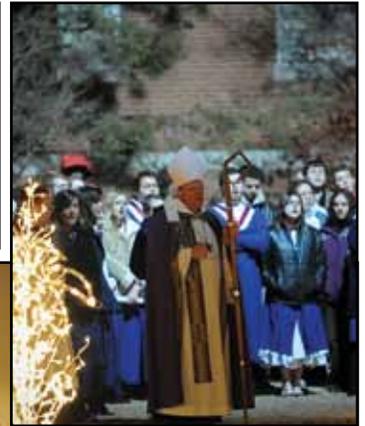
St. Gregory's University honored Brother Andrew "Andy" Raple, O.S.B., with the Distinguished Alumni Award during the university's Alumni Weekend held November 5-7, 2010.

Br. Andy has been one of the most familiar faces to generations of students at St. Gregory's, serving in the Abbey food service for more than 45 years. During that time, he helped prepare and manage meals for both the monastery and the student body. He is an expert baker, noted for his breads and cakes.



Br. Andy is known also for his talents in the greenhouse, where he raises orchids, long-stem roses, Easter lilies and poinsettias for Christmas. Several parishes purchase poinsettias and lilies from his stock.

Christmas 2010



The message and beauty of Christmas were very evident in the Abbey Church this year. Subprior Joachim carefully assembled hundreds of Fontanini statuettes to create a moving Nativity Scene and Br. Andrew once again cultivated dozens of poinsettia plants to fill the Church with seasonal beauty. A service of lessons, carols and lighting of the outdoor nativity scene was celebrated on Dec. 12. The monks held their annual Christmas party on Dec. 27, and Father Joachim's Bingo Game was once again a big hit!